sources of information about China and the countries of Central and Southern Asia in the days of the Mongols.

FOREIGN CONTACTS UNDER THE MONGOLS! FOREIGN RELIGIONS IN CHINA

Among the many influences from the outside which the presence of so many aliens brought to the Middle Kingdom, some of the most interesting were religious.

The timidity of the two Dominicans who began the journey with the Polos by no means characterized all their fellow friars. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Dominicans and Franciscans, taking advantage of the comparative ease of travel under the Mongols, covered much of Central Asia and went to India and China. The new burst of religious zeal which these orders represented and aided spread the Christian message fully as widely as the Italian merchants extended European commerce.

Some friars were sent on political errands by European rulers: more of them went on purely religious missions. Notable among the diplomatic envoys were two Franciscans, John of Piano Carpini, who (1245-1247) accomplished the round trip to Karakorum, and William of Rubruck, who made the journey out to the same Mongol capital and back a few years later (1253-1255).

So far as we know, the first friar to reach China proper was one who went with a purely religious objective, a Franciscan, John of Montecorvino. John arrived in Cambaluc in 1294, having come by way of India, where a travelling companion, a Dominican, had died. He gained the favor of the Emperor and by 1305 had baptized about six thousand converts and had built a church. When, shortly after 1305, the news of his

success reached Europe, the Pope appointed him Archbishop of Cambaluc and sent him reinforcements, three of whom, all Franciscans, reached China. Other Friars Minor went to China during the next few years, and we know of houses of the order at Zaitun (Griian-chow), the present Hangchow, and Yangchow—all three, it will be noted, important commercial cities—as well as at Cambaluc.

So far as we know, the last Roman Catholic missionary to pene-trate to China in the Middle Ages was a papal legate, John of Marignolli. Following the overland route, he reached Cambaluc in 1342, remained there three or four years, and, returning by